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COUNTRY  
Poland

SUBJECT  
Social Transformation in Poland

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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Post-War Population Policy

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1. The statistics on the increase of population, published recently by Poland, do not show a very optimistic picture for the immediate future. These statistics were made public

2. The increase in numbers of population for every one thousand inhabitants in the years 1948 and 1953 was as follows:

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	1948	1953
Poland	18.1	19.9
Polish Recovered Territories Only	25.6	27.6

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3. This means that in the period 1948-1953 the rate of population increase in Poland rose by 10 per cent while in the other countries it was reduced

The total numbers of Poland's population are already nearing 27 million.

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4. The number of deaths also seems to be to Poland's advantage. The respective statistics are as follows:

Number of Deaths for Every One Thousand Inhabitants in 1953

Poland 10.2

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5. As it was already mentioned, the statisticians forecast that the advantageous Polish rate of population increase will in all probability fall in the near future. The chief reasons for it are as follows:

- a. First, those classes of age of Polish population which are now entering the period of their greatest fertility, are people born during World War II and the German occupation. In that time, for easily understandable reasons, there was a very marked decrease in the numbers of births. Therefore, the section of the population which is at present most productive biologically, is at the same time abnormally small in comparison with other age groups.
- b. Second, the recent transformation of the economic conditions in Poland has resulted in the mass move of great numbers of the people from the countryside to the towns; this is quite an important factor, considering that the rate of population increase has always been bigger among the country people than among townsfolk. The importance of this great move is shown by the following statistical data:
  - (1) In the year 1931 (according to the population poll), 20.3 per cent of the whole Polish population lived in towns having more than 10 thousand inhabitants. In 1953, this number rose to 32.6 per cent of the whole population.
  - (2) In the year 1938, the number of working persons employed outside agriculture amounted to 2.7 million. In the year 1953, the number of these persons was already 5.6 million; and it is added that during the year 1954 it rose further by several hundred thousand.
  - (3) Before the war, over 60 per cent of Poland's population lived on the land. Now only over 40 per cent remained.

From the point of view of the population policy, all this denotes an imminent reduction in the number of births, which results from the reduction of the most fertile classes of countryside inhabitants.

7. With regard to the population problems, the Communist government in Poland is carrying on a sort of two-faced policy. On one hand, there is a number of very beneficial reforms and investments showing a sincere effort to obtain a high increase of the difference between the statistics of births and deaths. Here belong such special services as medical surgeries for mothers and babies, creches, family allowances, and all that pertains to maternity welfare. These services are being developed on a much larger scale than they were before the war, and are the best means to enable the nation to make up for the enormous population losses incurred during the war and occupation.
8. On the other hand, we observe a different policy, resulting from the general economic policy towards the Polish nation, which from the point of view of the population problem is most detrimental. First, the present housing situation is nothing less than deplorable, and the investments for housing are still ridiculously inadequate, especially when compared with the investments for industrial development. This certainly does not aid in the effort to increase the population. Second, insufficient rates of wages of the heads of families practically force the wives to leave their homes and to take employment, to which they are additionally prompted by the energetic Government pro agenda and also encouraged by the decrees assuring for them a complete equality of working conditions and career opportunities with the men. This does not help either in the raising of families and is an additional factor hindering the aims of re-population. One could say, in defence of the Polish government's policy, that women's labor in industry is but a transitory phase, a passing economic necessity in the first period of reconstruction and development, similarly as it was in many Western countries during the war. But this is not so.

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9. Many signs indicate that it is a permanent Communist policy to recruit masses of women for industrial employment. In this, Poland follows the example of the Soviet Union, where paid work of women has become an established social feature. It is enough to observe how emphatically Polish educational authorities insist that the "lack of balance" between the sexes at professional courses and schools of almost all branches of industry should be corrected at all costs. Even without these measures, however, the low standard of earnings is sufficient to make the women leave homes, in many cases surely against their will. The ultimate aim is presumably to replace home education of children by the state-run education in creches and kindergartens. Assuming that women in general will finally accept such a solution, the effect will be an at least temporary decline in the birth statistics.

#### Transformation of Class Structure

10. One of the most important changes in the class structure of today's Poland is the complete liquidation of the land-owning class, once so powerful, which even in the period between the two great wars still played an important part in Poland's life. It is difficult to believe that this class would ever reappear in Poland in the same role. There is also the liquidation of the class of factory owners, owners of big commercial enterprises and other capitalists; but this does not preclude the possibility of its forming again if changed conditions in the future will permit it.
11. The other (undoubtedly most beneficial) change in the social structure is an almost unlimited opportunity of fluctuation between the classes. Even if this means in many cases a degradation of certain individuals on the social ladder, for political reasons, the change by itself is good for the country. It has been made possible by the education reform of 1944, which opened all medium and higher schools free of charge to the masses. This reform corresponded with the general wish of the nation and its necessity was universally recognized. It is certain that if Poland were never under the Communist government, the reform would have been among the first passed after regaining independence. Therefore, however the conditions may change in the future, this particular reform has come to stay. It fulfills one of the most essential requirements of social justice, i.e., that the elite of the country should not be a strictly enclosed circle jealously guarding its privileges, but that there should be a constant flow of fresh forces and intellects to its ranks from all the classes of the population.
12. As regards professional structure of the population, we have to note, first of all, the decline of the peasant class from over 60 per cent to over 40 per cent of the total. Second, there is an important increase of people able to do intellectual work, owing to the development of higher education. In the sphere of higher education, there is a very marked stress on the technical studies as decidedly prevailing over the humanistic studies. All this is easily understood in view of the present needs of the country. According to official Polish data, 140,000 people are now studying at 78 Polish high schools and universities; and the Polytechnic of Gdansk alone, at the end of the last academic year, granted diplomas to 529 new engineers.

#### Social Reforms

13. The social reforms in the sphere of welfare so much praised by the Communist propaganda, on the other hand, have not brought real lasting benefits to the Polish working class. The state insurance systems in the entire Soviet bloc generally lag very much behind those which certain progressive capitalist countries [redacted] and Scandinavian states have introduced. The pre-war social insurance system in Poland had a number of faults, but even so it brought to the working classes, on the whole, greater advantages than the present one. The most striking example of the inadequacy of the present system are old-age and invalidity pensions, which are ridiculously small. The only real innovation are state-financed holidays for workers; but these are not yet developed on a scale sufficient to relieve all needs, and only a small portion of the population can benefit from them. Therefore, they are, inevitably, utilized as an instrument of government's policy of privileges.

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14. The last very important change in the social life of the country is the liquidation of the freedom of associations and the transformation of free trade unions into state-controlled organisms.

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